

# Influence of Celebrity Credibility on Brand Community Commitment towards Disaster Management Programs in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

Celebrities act as a credible communication source for many marketing and community-related communications. Community commitment for brands has been researched across the countries. Commitment of communities is an important matter for brands to meet desired responses within community-based brand building programs. Community commitment within disaster management is one of the national level priorities in many countries including emerging economies in Asia. Celebrities are used as a credible source to educate and motivate communities to get aware or actively participate in disaster management activities. This paper employed a quantitative survey method aiming the communities who actively engaged with disaster management programs sponsored or endorsed by celebrities in Sri Lanka, a country extendedly applies community-based disaster management strategies. Hypotheses were formed on how celebrity credibility influences brand community commitment to engage with disaster management activities whilst mediating effect of brand community trust is also hypothesized. A size of 230 sample was contacted for the survey. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was executed testing the hypotheses by using AMOS 20 software. Results verified celebrity credibility influences brand community commitment. Analysis proved brand commitment trust acts as a mediator on the effect made by celebrity credibility on brand community commitment within disaster management programs.

**Keywords:** brand community commitment, brand community trust, celebrity credibility, disaster management, Sri Lanka

## 1. Introduction

Brand community is a term found in the domain of marketing that usually reveals how brand and stakeholders interact for long term relationships. In the views of empirical evidences, brand community is identified as a community or group of people attributed by specialized geographically limited cluster showing social relationships admiring a particular brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). A community could be recognized as a set of interested individuals who engage with creating and negotiating meaning for a particular object or event (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). According to marketing related literature, brand community is claimed as a group of people who hold a strong interest towards a brand committing active deeds both in offline and online scopes (Jeppesen and Frederiksen, 2006). Thus, a brand community could be considered as one of the strong communication modes for an organization rather limiting a product brand. Being in a brand community provides aspirational value as it reflects self-association with the brand-related values and associations (Schembri, Merrilees, and Kristiansen 2010). Usually high-end brand could create such aspirational association for the one who intends to be a part of that brand community, for instance, luxury car brands like BMW (Szmigin & Reppel, 2001). However, the term "aspirational association" is found in the celebrity endorsement aspects in creating brand evaluations (Dissanayake, 2015; Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Hung, 2014). Some studies mainly highlight the benefits of brand community as creating loyalty, positive word of mouth and favorable behavior towards the brand or organization (Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; & Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). An effective brand community acts as extended communication channel whilst establishing devoted relationship with the cause (Anderson, 2005). In brief, brand community guarantees value creation to both organization and customers in many ways (Schau, Muniz & Arnould, 2009). According to Kang, Lee, Lee & Choi (2007), new communication options including social media had resulted extended impacts of brand communities including creating

environment for bonding customers and organizations for various avenues rather limiting a geographical limitation. Importantly, last decade identified brand community as a channel of information sharing without limiting to commercial matters, but creating opinions (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005).

The effect of brand community within different behavioral contexts is less examined besides customers and marketing productivity (Hur, Ahn, & Kim, 2011). In general, brand community behavior has been studied in previous researches in terms of how members or consumers commit for the action or forming attitude towards the cause (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Harris & Goode, 2004; McAlexander, Schouten, John, & Koenig, 2002). It has examined how brand community commitment is influenced by brand community trust explaining how members become motivated to commit for a brand-related behavior influenced by the trust (Hur et al., 2011). Additionally, trust and commitment relationship had been examined and postulated in many studies including some recently found works in the purview of marketing (Dissanayake, 2015; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The role of celebrities as a marketing stimulus in creating such trust leading to brand-related behaviors like commitment has been referred in many empirical studies (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Kumara, 2016; Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). As previously mentioned, brand community commitment could be considered as a brand-relationship behavior which is influenced via brand trust in general (Hur et al., 2011). Accordingly, this paper highlights some empirical evidences on how celebrity endorsement creates such brand trust within the message recipients leading to commitment behavior. The attributes like honesty, integrity, benevolence and other related stimulus could provide expectations for consumers to persuade brand trust (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011). Usually, such attributes are found in the source-based factors of celebrities (Seno & Lukas, 2007). Supportively, Scott & Lane (2000) pointed out celebrity endorsement as an effective source to create brand trust whilst it refers celebrity endorsement could create such perceived trust and attract new audience for the endorsed subject (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Conclusively, celebrity credibility is widely mentioned in empirical studies as the determinant of effectiveness of celebrity endorsements (Hung, 2014; Seno & Lukas, 2007). Influence of celebrities in developing commitment and trust behavior is found with different product and service scopes (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015). However, extended studies on how such celebrity credibility influences brand community commitment is a notable research gap. But there are cases found celebrities engage in disaster management activities through sponsored media channels or firms to create community commitment and trust. But, empirical evidences of their effectiveness in motivating communities to engage with disaster management are yet found as scant. Alongside, this paper attempts to investigate how celebrity endorsements results community commitment in engaging disaster management programs.

### *1.1 Context of the Study and Research Objectives*

Disaster management is a wide subject and it involves with disaster recovery, disaster prevention, distaste communication and even disaster mitigation aspects. Sri Lanka reports such devastative disaster incidents like T-tsunami took place in 2005, which made serious damage to nearly 2/3 of Sri Lankan coastal areas (Sri Lanka Country Paper: Disaster Management Policy of Sri Lanka, 2006). This devastated incident made Sri Lankan government to reform and introduce new institutional framework followed by strategic initiatives to manage and recover natural disasters. However, it finds less focused to integrate with private sector institutions to execute a national strategy as proposed by disaster management policy in Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka Country Paper: Disaster Management Policy of Sri Lanka, 2006). Later, strategic initiation was found to execute Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) whilst focusing collaborative programs to be conducted with private sector institutions ( Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program: SLCDMP, 2014). Likewise, Sri Lanka is found as a context which attributes intensive focused to strategize institutions to provide required long term and short term facilities in managing disaster and care the public.

One of the highlighted matters is community participation for disaster recovery strategies (Sri Lanka Comprehensive Disaster Management Program: SLCDMP, 2014) Adding to that, even private sector organizations reshaped their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies and programs considering disaster management as one of the prioritized contexts to be focused. Sometimes, corporate sector companies are much alert and proactive to educate and actively participate in the disaster management programs. Specially, many television and radio channels of Sri Lanka started developing branded CSR programs connecting to the good course of educating and supporting to recover post-disaster repercussions. These branded CSR programs extendedly connect with the potential communities who may be exposed to disasters like flood and draught as seasonally predictable issues. Community –engaged CSR strategies were found in Sri Lanka resulting brand communities which serves for immediate disaster management causes. Such programs meet long term brand relationship behaviors whilst contributing to good causes like disaster management projects. One of the complimenting strategies followed by those companies is getting celebrities involved as a stimulation to promote

communities to participate in such CSR programs. Celebrities are used as a credible source to establish community trust and commitment in participating such disaster management projects. However, it finds less empirical investigations to justify the effectiveness of celebrities in managing disasters through brand community commitment and community trust (Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; Scarpi, 2010; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010).

Accordingly, this paper attempts to examine how credibility of celebrity endorsement influences community brand commitment in actively participating to disaster management-related CSR programs. Secondly, study addresses to investigate how community brand trust could be influenced through the credibility of celebrity endorsements. Finally, paper attempts to examine the mediating effect of community brand trust towards the influence of celebrity credibility on brand community trust (Hur, et.al.2011). The supportive theoretical and empirical evidences for the set objectives have been presented in the literature review.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Paper reviewed and justified empirical contribution found within the main concepts of celebrity endorsements highlighting celebrity credibility, brand communication commitment and brand community trust. Alongside, undermentioned content presents empirical review supporting to hypothesizing variable relationships.

### 2.1 Relationship Celebrity Endorsement on Community/Public Impact

Celebrity endorsement has been defined and modeled by deferent authors along with cognitive perspectives, economic perspectives and social perspectives (Seno & Lukas, 2007). It has defined celebrity as someone known to the public referring to their respective achievements in the areas other than endorsed product class (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). It reflects that celebrity should stand within own performance to be admired as a celebrity rather getting known with the endorsed brands. McCracken (1989) explained celebrity as any person who holds public recognition that eventually promotes consumer goods appeared with them. Accordingly, actors, athletes, entertainers, public figures and even popular politicians could be recognized as celebrities. Shipm (2010) said celebrity should be a well-known personality to the public for the accomplishments achieved other than the product endorsed. Thus, the influential power of celebrities to general public is a noted fact as mentioned in empirical studies. It proves celebrities possess their credibility related attributes including public recognition to influence, educate or even shape the public behavior other than the immediate customers of the endorsed product (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; McCracken 1989; Shimp, 2010). Supportively, celebrity endorser is explained as a reference source for someone to reshape the behavior of respondents in par with the message delivered to the public (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh, 2004). The connection of celebrities on community can be linked with one of the parenting theories of celebrity endorsment. Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953) introduced theory of "Source Credibility" to explain how celebrities could create credible influence on public or audience. In source credibility, a celebrity has been admired as an icon of attracting the attention of audience which is said as "public attention" (Koernig & Boyd, 2009). Further, it has mentioned that a celebrity is usually a source which could make lasting impression in one's memory who may cross its path. This validates how celebrity should possess the notion of acceptance of the audience or being worshiped by the fans so that making such impact to the respective target audience (Dissanayake, 2015). Moreover, Choi and Berger (2010) said celebrity is who gains reputation and recognition form the society depending on the way how the respective personality is maintained uniquely. Therefore, empirical evidences rationalize celebrities as a powerful and effective communication mode to motivate related communities or public.

Alongside, Alsmadi (2006) refers celebrity character should be able to absorb three types of power aspects. Firstly, the power should be earned via the ability of getting attention, which results breaking cluttered advertising atmosphere making brand noticeable to respective audience. Secondly, it is the aspect of credibility which make endorser as a powerful source in conveying sense of trust on the endorsed brand. The third root is persuasion ability which brings the power to endorser in reinforcing to adopt the endorsed-matter. Per say, this argument can be modeled into this paper arguing celebrities influence community or public via their ability of getting the public attention and then establishing community trust that eventually leads behavior, which meant community commitment ( Hur,at.al.2011). However, it finds bit of challenging to rationalize empirical studies carried out on celebrity endorsement and brand community commitment for CSR or charity causes. Studies are not enough found extendedly examining the power of celebrities in motivating community commitment to contribute disaster management programs. However, it finds trendy practice of using celebrities as a testimonial to encourage public to contribute for CSR or charity works including disaster management contexts.

Conclusively, Ohanian (1990) postulated trustworthiness, expertness and attractiveness as the main attributes for en effective endorsement to motivate recipients to act or evaluate endorsed- message. The said attributes had

been framed as the explanations of celebrity credibility that makes effective communication with the audience (Spry, Pappu & Cornwell, 2011). Recently held studies had admired the explanation of Ohanion (1990) to hypothesize effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in influencing behavioral outcomes and evaluations (Ahmed, Mir & Farooq 2012; Hassana & Jamila, 2014; Hung, 2014; Karasiewicz & Kowalczuk 2014; Muda, Musa, Mohamad & Borhan 2014). Meanwhile, influence of celebrity endorsement has been empirically denoted in many studies with reference to brand trust and brand-related behaviors. Studies confirm celebrity endorsement as an effective tool to create perceived trust on endorsed- matter and commitment outcomes like brand relationship behaviors (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Doss & Carstens 2014; Kumara, 2016). Thus, paper hypothesizes celebrity credibility attributed by trustworthiness, expertness and attractiveness as the main independent variable that influence community commitment behavior and community trust.

### *2.2 Brand Community Commitment and Role of Trust in Commitment Behavior*

This paper supports how celebrity endorsement influences public or community other than its direct target audience of product users. The introductory brief discussed how a brand community is made and characterized. Now, it attempts to connect how brand community commitment and the trust of community towards the cause are interconnected (Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; Scarpi, 2010 & Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). According to the niche of this study, researcher emphasizes how the mechanism of brand community commitment towards disaster management programs is linked with trust factor.

Usually, brand community attributes social networking and community engagement ( Schau et. al. 2009). This may act as a positive strength to motivate public to engage with an intended cause sponsored by a brand or company. The media participation including online options could establish trust on the band or company leading a committed behavior like brand loyalty (Walden, 2000), and trust factor can be established via effective celebrity endorsements (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017). The mediating role of brand trust on different brand-relationship behaviors including long term commitment has been referred in recently held studies (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017). The influence of community brand trust on brand community commitment is tested and confirmed the relationships (Hur et al., 2011). The notion of trust factor is a key mechanism to build long term relationship that would generate commitment (Wang & Emurian, 2005). Brand trust is formed with perception and leads behavioral outcomes of influenced parties (Elliott & Yannopoulou, 2007). The credibility associated with celebrities could generate such perception in building trust factor amongst the audience being communicated (Dwivedi & Johnson, 2013). The role of trust formed on cognitive belief towards behavioral actions like word-of mouth and loyalty is a referred in empirical studies (Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Aleman, Yague-Guillen 2003; Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017). Additionally, the influential ability of trust on long term informational relationship commitment and brand evangelism related commitments has been denoted in recent studies (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Doss & Carstens, 2014)

According to the case of this study, Sri Lankan media companies strategically initiated CSR and charity works. Those programs usually combine with branded attributes including community-connected brand name and positioning strategy on social responsibility with emotional attachment. Further, celebrity endorsement has been utilized to build public attention and stakeholder participation when it organizes disaster awareness programs and recovery activities. Celebrities represent the respective media institution or sponsored institution in such disaster management programs. Thus, brand-community relationship is extendedly established with continuous information links including celebrity endorsements for the sponsored charity causes Supportively, Schau et. al. (2009) mentioned that value creation process related to brand communities is supported by information dissemination that eventually results trust and engagement. In addition, Carroll & Ahuvia, (2006) also confirmed that value creation generates people relationship in brand communities including trust and love. Likewise, foresaid review empirically denotes the conceptual relationship amongst celebrity credibility as influencing force towards community commitment and community brand trust.

### *2.3 Hypotheses Development*

The effectiveness the credibility of celebrity endorsement has been empirically tested in many studies in relations to long term brand relationships and behavioral commitments (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Doss & Carstens, 2014; Hung, 2014; Spry et al., 2011). Celebrity credibility attributed by trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness is an empirically and theoretically supported determinant influences behavioral commitment on endorsed-subjects (Dissanayake & Weerasiri, 2017; Hassana & Jamila, 2014; Hung, 2014; Karasiewicz & Kowalczuk, 2014; Muda, Musa, Mohamad & Borhan, 2014; Ohanion, 1990; Shimp, 2010).

In brief, the role of brand trust influenced by celebrity endorsement has been claimed to examine as a mediating mechanism relates to long term brand commitment aspects (Kumara, 2016; Ong, Khong, Faziharudean & Dai, 2012). In overall, it claims brand community commitment behavior is yet to be examined with different perspectives as empirical studies are found scant (Hur, et.al.2011). Accordingly, this paper contributed newness to existing knowledge by examining the role of celebrity endorsement in influencing brand community commitment mediated by community trust via the following hypotheses.

**H1:** Celebrity credibility significantly influences brand community commitment for disaster management activities

**H2:** Celebrity credibility significantly influences brand community trust for disaster management activities

**H3:** Brand community trust disaster management activities attributes significant relationship with brand community commitment for disaster management activities

**H4:** The impact of celebrity credibility on brand community commitment for disaster management activities is mediated by brand community trust

### 3. Methodology

This study was based on a deductive research design as hypotheses were fully supported by empirical and theoretical justifications. A quantitative methods were opted in conducting the survey with the research instrument of questionnaire. Variables and indicators were operationalized in line with empirical evidences. Accordingly, celebrity credibility was itemized with empirical evidences widely cited in previously held studies. Alongside, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness and Expertise were operationalized with the respective items to measure celebrity credibility (Dissanayake, 2015; Ohanion, 1990; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Shimp, 2010). Brand community trust was measured by using multiple scale proposed by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). The items of Brand community commitment were justified based on the contribution of Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh and Kim (2008) and Algesheimer et al. (2005). The validity of the measures was justified by using Composite Reliability (CR) tests. It has referred CR, Factor Loading Values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to determine the convergent validity (Ho, 2013). Normality was tested by employing Kurtosis and Skewness tests (Byne, 2010). Questions were measured by using 7 points Likert scale and questions were worded as fitting to the subjects surveyed in examining causal relationships amongst variables (Lampard & Pole, 2015).

Data collection was executed during 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2017 where community participative disaster management programs endorsed by celebrities were implemented in Sri Lanka. Finally, responses were collected from 230 respondents by employing well-trained enumerators representing undergraduates of three main public universities in Sri Lanka namely University of Kelaniya, University of Rajarata and University of Ruhuna. A convenient sampling method was employed as enumerators happened to contact participants who engaged with disaster management programs in different districts. A qualifying question was included to filter relevant participants to be surveyed. Accordingly, communities who were exposed to public awareness programs sponsored by celebrities inviting to participate disaster management activities were determined as the sample units. Researchers used both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze demographic data and test the hypotheses. Alongside, structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was employed as it satisfied the minimum sample size of 200 (Kline, 2015). Such large sample size usually confirms the model fit (Jackson, 2003). Covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) was used as it ensures quantitative assessment considering convergent and discriminant validity that results good level of quality of the modeled latent constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair, Gabriel, & Patel, 2014).

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Analysis of Sample Profile

The demographic data of the sample had been summarized as undermentioned. Accordingly, 76% of majority was found as male segment whilst 43% of majority was noted in the age category of 30-40 years. Additionally, it reports that suburban segment as the large representation of the sample (58%) compared to rural and urban categories. It indicates more than 80% of respondents had been exposed to disaster management programs induced by celebrities via electronic media campaigns compared to social media and print media tools.

#### 4.2 Results of Normality, Reliability and Validity

It used the Kurtosis and Skewness tests to confirm the normality of each item. Accordingly, the rule suggested by Byne (2010) was employed to confirm the level of normality. Normality testing for each construct was executed to evaluate how far each construct finds normally distributed. The indices for the normality were in line with the

rule thumb specified by Byne (2010). The results of the univariate normality test are undermentioned as generated by SPSS 18 software. All the Skewness values were ranged within the threshold of +3 and -3 whilst Kurtosis measurements were found between -7 to + 7 indicating normality (Byne, 2010). The highest and lowest values related to Skewness were found between -1.114 and 0.102 (see Table 1) normality whilst Kurtosis vales ranged between 0-.688 and 0.728 satisfying normality indices (see Table 1). Additionally, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was executed and it found as 0.879 reporting  $p$  value less than 0.05 satisfying requirements to execute a factor analysis (Williams, Brown, & Onsmann, 2010). Accordingly, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was executed and all the items reported factor loadings more than 0.5 confirming convergent validity (Ho, 2013). Additionally, Average Variance Extraction (AVE) and Construct Reliability (CR) tests proved convergent validity of the constructs as AVE values found greater than 0.5 whilst CR values reported greater than 0.7 (Fornell & Lacker, 1981). Results have been mentioned in the Table 1. Therefore, it confirmed that Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) can be run as it satisfies the threshold of validity measurements (Ho, 2013; Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). Researchers executed the CFA to confirm model fit before testing hypotheses and related conclusions. The measurement model indicated normed Chi-square as 2.64 whilst Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found as 0.063. The Incremental Fit Indices (IFI) and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) were reported as 0.912 and 0.902 respectively. Those results met the condition of  $p$  value is less than 0.05 providing needful statistical eligibility in heading with interpretations (Ho, 2013; Kline, 2005).

Table 1. Results of results of normality, reliability and validity

Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Celebrity Credibility : Trustworthiness				<b>.653</b>	<b>.765</b>
Endorser is trustworthy	-.641	.380	.654		
Endorser is honest	-.575	-.365	.786		
Endorser is dependable	-.486	-.206	.541		
Endorser is reliable	-.539	-.172	.765		
Endorser is sincere	-.209	-.246	.762		
Celebrity Credibility :Expertise				<b>.602</b>	<b>.712</b>
Endorser is qualified to endorse it	-.312	-.480	.508		
Endorser is knowledgeable	-.269	-.485	.765		
Endorser is an expert	-.342	-.390	.654		
Endorser possesses good experience	-.522	-.688	.564		
Endorser is skilled in the use	-.312	-.180	.754		
Celebrity Credibility :Attractiveness				<b>.641</b>	<b>.767</b>
Endorser is good looking	-1.114	.727	.656		
Endorser is attractive	-1.124	.728	.576		
Endorser is sexy	-.243	-.175	.708		
Endorser is classy	-.397	.230	.612		
Endorser is elegant	-.403	.107	.634		
Brand community trust				<b>.658</b>	<b>.803</b>
Trust on brand community endorsed	-.509	.338	.713		
Rely on brand community endorsed	-.514	.260	.678		
Believe endorsed brand community is honest	-.432	.264	.659		
Brand Community Commitment				<b>.597</b>	
Feel a sense of belonging with brand community	-.234	-.563	.506		
Feel to visit brand community continuously	-.112	-.335	.508		
Feel to exchange information and opinions	.102	.247	.631		
Feel to collect information through this brand community	-.098	-.132	.542		

#### 4.3 Reporting Findings: Testing Hypotheses on SEM Direct Paths

The output statistics estimates indicated by regression weights generated by AMOS-SEM were employed to test the hypotheses (Ho, 2013). This paper hypothesized mainly four hypotheses out of which three hypotheses were direct path hypotheses. According to the results received from SEM, we concluded the following findings based on the summarized statistical estimates mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2. Reporting SEM hypotheses

No	Relationship	Estimates	S.E	C.R	P	Result
H1	CC <--- BCC	-.213	0.071	-2.708	***	Support
H2	CC <--- BCT	-.215	.192	-2.032	***	Support
H3	BCT <--- BCC	.178	.039	3.172	***	Support

Note. **CC**: Celebrity Credibility, **BCC**: Brand Community Commitment, **BCT**: Brand Community Trust.

According to the results given in the Table 2, it concludes celebrity credibility attributed by trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness influences brand community commitment to engage with disaster management programs. Further, celebrity credibility is an influencer to make brand community trust as it indicates a significant relationship. Results indicate brand community trust and brand community commitment are also significantly related concepts. Conclusively, all the direct path hypotheses were proved as *p* values indicates significant level of probability of acceptance.

#### 4.4 Reporting Result of Mediation

We applied AMOS AxB Estimand tool to examine the mediation effect as conventional methods recommended by Baron & Kenny (1989) and Sobel Test (1982) were argued with different limitations pointed out by recently held studies (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). Accordingly, instructions of Gaskin (2016) were followed to test the mediation effect of indirect path by using AMOS Estimand option. Then, H4 of this paper predicts brand community trust (BCT) mediates the influence made by celebrity credibility (CC) on brand community commitment (BCC). The results of AMOS Estimand path multiplying method is as undermentioned (see Table 3).

Table 3. Results of mediating impact (AMOS estimand path multiplier method)

H	Relationship	Estimate (AxB)	Lower	Upper	P	Result
H4	CC→BCT→BCC	-.134	-.301	-.089	.001	Support

Therefore, it concludes that brand community trust mediates the impact of celebrity credibility towards brand community commitment when it uses celebrities to motivate communities to engage with disaster management programs. However, as per the explanation of Baron & Kenny (1989), this is a partial mediation since the direct path between celebrity credibility (CC) and brand community commitment (BCC) was found as significant.

## 5. Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper attempts to reveal how far celebrity credibility attributed by trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness (Ohanion, 1991; Hung, 2014; Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015) could influence communities to effectively participate in disaster management programs. Usually, celebrities are mainly found endorsing commercial propositions whilst charity works are also found at a level. But, involvement of celebrities to encourage disaster management programs are still found scant. This paper examined Sri Lanka as a context to examine the effectiveness of using celebrities to develop brand community commitment to engage with disaster management programs sponsored by commercial institutes including media stations. Brand community trust was examined as a mediator followed by empirical justifications. Result verified effectiveness of celebrity credibility is significant to establish brand community commitment to enthusiastically participate in the disaster management programs. It is line with some empirical findings that confirmed brand community trust and community commitment result favorable influences on sponsored institutions (Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; Scarpi, & Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). Thus, it makes a strategic advantage to sponsored media channel brand and commercial institutes to create long term brand community commitment for their respective commercial purposes as well. Further results revealed celebrity credibility as an effective tool to establish brand community

trust that intensifies the motivation of brand community commitment. Therefore, managerial implications are highlighted to use celebrities to establish brand community trust towards the sponsored brand via community engaged programs.

Conclusively, this paper justifies the effectiveness of applying celebrities as a credibility source to influence communities to participate in the disaster management programs. Thus, future studies could further examine how celebrity endorsements act as effective stimulus to build brand community commitment and brand community trust referring different cases of community branding perspectives. The influence of celebrities on endorsed-proposition or message could be intensified or moderated on how they are psychologically bonded with the community or customers (Hung, 2014; Kumara, 2016). This is mentioned in the theory called Absorption-Addiction Model which explains such bond as celebrity worship motives (McCutcheon, Lynn, Lange, & Houran 2002). Thus, future studies need investigating how celebrity worship motives act as intensifying mechanism inducing brand community trust leading to brand community commitment. Finally, there are cases and empirical research propositions found examining how effectively celebrities influence such long term benefits to brands or firms that sponsor charity, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and community marketing programs. Extended studies may further focus how social media as a modern communication mode could effectively motivate brand relationship behaviors resulted by community engagement and relationship marketing programs.

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